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"...being weary, they had rebelled": Pueblo subsistence and labor under Spanish colonialism

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ABSTRACT

Native American responses to Spanish colonialism are explored through an analysis of multiple lines of evidence concerning subsistence practices, diet, and health in the Salinas Pueblo area of central New Mexico. Zooarchaeological and paleoethnobotanical data from three Pueblo villages that experienced different degrees of Spanish missionization are the focus of this study. In addition, human osteological data from one village provide important information on activity patterns and health. These data are used to document the kinds of changes that occurred in Pueblo labor patterns, food consumption, and health from the pre-colonial to colonial periods. Synthetic analyses document the development of some degree of inter-village specialization in large game hunting, hide processing, and corn farming, presumably in response to Spanish tribute levies in corn and antelope hides, and demands on Pueblo labor in other arenas. There also appears to be a degree of divergence in women's and men's lives in the colonial period. These southwestern data are then compared with similar information from the southeastern US to identify patterns of similarity and difference in Native American experiences of and strategies for dealing with Spanish colonization.

In 1681, a Pueblo Indian from the Salinas area of central New Mexico testified at a hearing concerning the reasons for the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. His explanation was that "...they were tired of the work that they had to do for the Spaniards and the religious, because they did not allow them to plant or do other things for their own needs; and that, being weary, they had rebelled" (Hackett and Shelby, 1942, pp. 23–24).

His testimony is one of the few statements in Spanish documents that concerns indigenous views on the impact of Spanish colonization in the Americas. In general, such documents recount the actions that Spanish friars, military, and civil authorities took, but not the responses of native peoples. Archaeological information is thus a critical source of data on the specifics of Native American actions in the face of colonization.

Over the past few decades, archaeological research on indigenous peoples' responses to colonization has flourished. In the southeastern United States, for example, a series of projects has analyzed floral, faunal, bioarchaeological, and ethnohistoric data to investigate the relationship between indigenous people and Spanish missionaries, soldiers, and townspeople (e.g., Larsen, 1990, 2001; Larsen et al., 2002; Miller et al., 1989; Deagan, 1991, 2001; Scarry, 2001; Thomas, 1990, 1993). One of the most salient points to emerge from this research is that different degrees of direct contact with colonizers led to different kinds of native action and, initially, different degrees of change in native practices.

In the southwestern United States, in contrast, archaeological research concerning Pueblo responses to Spanish colonization is only just developing (e.g., Preucel, 2002; Lycett, 2004, 2005). Fortunately, recently completed analyses of archaeological data from three colonial period (seventeenth century) Pueblo villages in the Salinas region of central New Mexico have afforded us the opportunity to address this issue. In this paper we evaluate Salinas Pueblo actions in the face of Spanish labor and tribute demands through an analysis of subsistence practices, diet, labor, and health. Each of the villages under study experienced different levels of missionization, which has given us the opportunity to compare different experiences with colonialism in a single area. While an interest in variability among individual villages originally guided our research, the results of our efforts have documented significant transformation in region-wide economic organization, and in the labor of women and men.

Initial European–Native American interactions

The economic, political, and social actions of Native Americans were affected by the nature, timing, and contexts of European

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contact (Fitzhugh, 1985; Gosden, 2004). Initial indigenous actions were especially influenced by the nature of European interests in an area and European capacity for conquest. In the initial decades of contact, trade and missionization were two of the primary motivations for Europeans to interact with Native American populations.

Where European interests involved trade, Native American populations often restructured their economic activities to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by exchange. In many of these cases there developed a dynamic "middle ground" (White, 1991; Gosden, 2004) of mutual negotiation and some congruence of action so that trade could proceed. Reciprocal relations of the "middle ground" involved both trade and conflict, mutual interest and mutual distrust. Although in these contexts Europeans did not dominate the interchange, marked social and political changes were engendered within Native American societies through their participation in trade. New social identities emerged from the changing social and material conditions of Native American lives and the negotiation of diverse interests.

In the late 1700s, for example, upon contact with European fur traders, Haida and Nootka populations traded otter pelts for clothing, iron, flour, guns, ammunition, and rum. Trading with Europeans articulated well with the thriving pre-contact exchange system among the Haida and Nootka with mainland coastal Tlingit and Tsimshian, as they increasingly relied on inland populations for supplies of otter pelts (Acheson, 1998, p. 90; Dixon, 1789, p. 63; Walker, 1982, p. 59). Although European fur traders initially obtained pelts in return for relatively few European goods, they routinely remark on the challenges of negotiating for sea otter pelts soon after Native American populations became aware of the Europeans' strong and persistent interest in this commodity (e.g., Bishop, 1967, p. 77; Ingraham, 1971, pp. 101–146). With the stakes increasingly high on both sides, conflict between Europeans and Native Americans was not uncommon. Fisher (1992) and others (e.g., Ceci, 1990, pp. 187–188; Jewitt, 1975, pp. 49–50; Jewitt, 1988, pp. 44–45) document the harassment and taking of lives on both sides of the Northwest coast fur trade.

Trade with the people aboard European, and later American, ships resulted in social and ecological changes on the Northwest coast. The fur trade provided new opportunities for chiefs to increase their political status and that of their communities, resulting in marked changes in political relations among the Haida (Acheson, 2005). By the 1820s, however, this intensive trade in otter pelts had decimated the sea otter population to the point that the Haida developed a new craft, argillite carving, to maintain their capacity to participate in trade with Europeans (Mullins and Paynter, 2000).

The onset of the fur trade on the East coast two hundred years earlier, from the late 1500s through the early 1600s (Ceci, 1990), involved similar kinds of Native American–European interactions. An interesting twist on the European–Native American fur trade there, however, was the indigenous specialization on the production of wampum, a small, standardized shell bead. A number of wampum production locations developed along the Atlantic Coast, from south of Cape Cod to Long Island (Ceci, 1990). This indigenous product was what inland Native American fur procurers demanded in exchange for their product (Ceci, 1990, pp. 170, 185, 209; Dickason, 1997, p. 243). Thus, while metal and cloth were certainly part of the East coast trade, an indigenous commodity dominated it.

In contrast to these trade-centered intercultural relationships were contexts in which European interests played out through colonization, missionization, and direct exploitation of indigenous peoples. The imposition of taxation, tribute, servitude, and alien religious doctrines highly constrained native peoples' decision-making and actions (Isaacman and Roberts, 1995, p. 2; Lyons and Papadopoulos, 2002, p. 7). These are the conditions under which indigenous populations, including the Salinas Pueblo peoples, interacted with Spanish colonists in California, and the southeastern and southwestern United States. Chris Gosden (2004, pp. 28–30 and 114–152) has termed the Spanish form of colonization *terra nullis*, a process characterized by the appropriation of land, demographic decimation, and complete disregard for indigenous social, ritual, and political structures, traditions, and values. In the remainder of this paper we consider in depth the strategies that Pueblo Indians used in the face of European colonists and missionaries who acted from this perspective. This study provides a strong case from which to develop further archaeological research that compares the intricacies of trade- and mission-focused interaction.

Responses of Native American peoples to colonization tend to be framed against the backdrop of demographic collapse (Acheson, 1998; Deagan, 2001; Hill, 1998; Gosden, 2004). In many regions, including the Southwest, however, Native Americans remained during and after the "Great Dying". In his discussion of the *terra nullis* form of colonialism Gosden (2004) focuses on the catastrophe of the demographic collapse, but in so doing ignores the actions of the living. The Salinas archaeological record, discussed in this paper, affords us the opportunity to investigate such actions.

The archaeological record of Native American–Spanish interaction

The materialization of Native American engagement with Spanish colonists takes many forms, analyses of which illuminate different aspects of practice and value under colonialism. Domestic material culture, particularly ceramics, has been an especially fruitful source of information in exploring the persistence and transformation of Native American identities and traditions (see Pauketat, 2001; Silliman, 2001; Saunders, 1998, 2001; Capone, 1995; Spielmann et al., 2006).

In this paper, we focus on a different kind of materiality: that represented by the residues of subsistence activities such as hunting, gathering, and farming, as well as the information that bioarchaeology can provide concerning labor and health. Native American labor and products of that labor, particularly corn and hides, were the primary form of tribute that Spaniards exacted in both the southwestern and southeastern US. We take a two-scale comparative approach to our analyses, beginning with comparisons among contemporaneous pueblos in the Salinas area, and concluding with a comparison of the Salinas subsistence and bioarchaeological data with those available from colonized populations in the US Southeast.

Our interest in changes in the organization of subsistence labor under colonization dovetails well with Silliman's (2001) emphasis on appropriated labor as being central to the daily lived experience of the colonized. As Lycett (2004, 2005) has noted, missions were the most important centers of production, and hence labor mobilization, in the colonial Southwest. In this paper, we document the (1) persistence of certain kinds of labor from pre-colonial times, (2) marked intensification of other forms of pre-colonial labor, and (3) introduction of new activities as expressed in the archaeological and bioarchaeological records of the Salinas pueblos. Labor organization changed as well, with an apparent shift from relative inter-pueblo autonomy in the acquisition and use of subsistence resources to interdependence in the face of province-wide Spanish tribute demands.

Spanish colonialism and Native American labor

Throughout much of the "New World", the labor and resources of indigenous peoples were significant sources of income for Spanish governors, soldiers, and friars (e.g., see Bushnell, 1994, pp. 111–117; Fowler, 1991, 1993, p. 190; Ganson, 1994; Jones 1998, p. 155; Patch, 1994; Rothschild, 2003; Saunders, 2000, pp. 31–35; Silverblatt, 1980; Thomas, 1990, 1993). In particular, colonists, soldiers, and missionaries living at the very margins of the Spanish empire